

COOKE'S ROW, VILLA NO. 7  
Georgetown  
3027 Q Street, Northwest  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS DC-829  
*DC, GEO, 231-*

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FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### COOKE'S ROW, VILLA No. 7

HABS NO. DC-829

Location: 3027 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Present Owner: Elsa Walsh and Bob Woodward

Present Use: Private residence

Significance: In 1868, the first governor of the District of Columbia, Henry D. Cooke, had erected four double houses, combining elements of the Italianate and Second Empire architectural styles. Designed by Morris Starkweather, who also was the architect for another important example of Second Empire architecture in Washington, D.C., Georgetown Visitation School, this row is a rare and outstanding example of planned development in late nineteenth century Georgetown. Of the four structures, this house is the only one with a tower, giving it visual importance above the other houses in the row and making it the best example in the row of the mid-nineteenth century desire for picturesque architecture.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

##### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The HABS documentation on Cooke's Row, Villa No. 3 (HABS No. DC-182) quoted The Evening Star of June 30, 1868, "Messrs. Starkweather and Plowman, the accomplished architects, engineers and surveyors of Washington, some months since commenced the construction of eight first-class cottage villas located on Stoddert Street on the south side of and adjoining the beautiful grounds of Henry D. Cooke, Esq. On the famed Heights of Georgetown."

##### 2. Original and subsequent owners:

1792	(Deed A-117) George Beall & wife To Thomas Beall & wife
1798	Deed (D-67) Thomas Beall of George & wife To William Craik

- 1808 Deed (U-76) 8 ½ acres more or less  
Edmund J. Lee, executor of William Craik  
To  
David Peter
- 1812 will of David Peter (will Book 1-204)  
Some land to be sold, some to be inherited by his children
- 1836 Deed (WB 61-82, 62-520) 8 acres, Peters Grove  
William Ramsey & wife, James Peter & wife, George H.  
Peter, and James Beverly & wife  
To  
John Marbury
- 1844 Deed (WB 109-193)  
John Marbury  
To  
John Carter
- 1844 Will(Will Book 6-300)  
Devises to wife Eleanor house and grounds...and residue of estate to John  
Marbury, Robert P. Dunlop, and John Kurtz in fee.
- 1867 Deed (D11-455) Peter's Grove and more recently known as Carter Place  
John Marbury & Robert P. Dunlop  
To  
John Carter O'Neal
- 1867 Deed of Trust (ECE 10-419) to secure promissory notes and, in trust for  
Laura S. Cooke, wife of Henry D. Cooke  
John Carter O'Neal  
To  
William G. Moorhead
- 1869 Release T&R (6-484) release of above deed of trust  
John Carter O'Neal  
To  
William G. Moorhead
- 1871 Deed (735-80)  
William G. Moorhead, Henry D. Cooke et ux  
To  
Jay Cooke (Henry's brother)

- 1874        Deed (no citation recorded) conveys all estate in trust  
              for creditors assignment under bankruptcy act  
              Jay Cooke et al  
              To  
              Edwin M. Lewis
- 1875        Equity (4613) Bill by trustee in bankruptcy under order of District Court  
              of Eastern Pa. For sale of caption (?)  
              Edwin M. Lewis, tr  
              vs.  
              Laura S. Cooke et vir
- 1876        Deed (834-466)  
              Edwin M. Lewis, tr  
              To  
              William G. Moorhead trustee for Laura S. Cooke
- 1876        Quit Claim (834-463)  
              Jay Cooke  
              To  
              William G. Moorhead trustee for Laura S. Cooke
- 1876        Deed (834-465)  
              William G. Moorhead & Laura S. Cooke, wife of Henry D.  
              To  
              William H. Barnard
- 1876        Trust (834-469)  
              William H. Barnard  
              To  
              William E. Chandler & William McGeorge, Jr.
- 1879        Deed (909-347) same as 834-465  
              William H. Barnard  
              To  
              Henry D. Cooke & Laura S. Cooke tr
- 1881        Deed (976-105)  
              Wm. E. Chandler & Wm. McGeorge, Jr.  
              To  
              Van H. Higgins
- 1885        Deed ( 1143-135)

Van H. Higgins & wife Lena H.  
To  
Alexander M. Beall

1886 Deed (1186-240)  
Alexander M. Beall & ux Elizabeth G.  
To  
Henry D. Cooke

1886 Trust (1186-245) (In trust for among others, Henry D. Cooke)  
Henry D. Cooke et ux Anna H.  
To  
Mahlon Ashford and John Ridout

.....

1976 John Pierre Safarti  
To  
Bob Woodward

The incomplete chain of title is a slightly abbreviated version of the chain of title at the Peabody Room. None of the information has been verified.

Bob Woodward supplied the information on the last transaction and it also appeared in a newspaper clipping at the Peabody Room.

Mrs. Grace Dunlop Ecker in her *A Portrait of Old Georgetown* states that the spinster Trapier sisters were long time owners and occupants of the house. A limited review of Boyd's *Directory of the City of Washington* shows that one or more sister lived there from at least 1902 to 1929. The 1933 directory lists the house as vacant and the apparently one surviving sister as living at 2700 Q Street, an apartment building.

In December of that year, Mrs. John Dodge Peter is listed as owner of a building permit application. Fourteen years later, a 1947 building permit lists Mrs. Eldridge Jordan as owner. A note at the Peabody Room lists Mrs. Eldridge Jordan Landa as a long-time resident and that Harriet R. Southerland Wright, widow of former ambassador to Cuba lived there at the time of her death in 1958. Without additional research it is not possible to verify the information at the Peabody Room.

3. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The Evening Star wrote that "Starkweather and Plowman... some months since commenced the construction of eight first-class cottage villas..." Mary Mitchell in *Chronicles of Georgetown Life, 1865-1900* stated "Cooke Row was probably

planned in the late summer of 1867 with Joseph Collins, the local contractor who lived at 3016 O Street. Consultants were Starkweather & Plowman..." Kenneth T. Gibbs in a 1972 Masters Thesis (University of Virginia, copy at the Peabody Room) wrote that the Starkweather & Plowman partnership was short-lived and that Plowman had previously been a builder. Based on these sources, it seems likely that Starkweather designed the four villas and that Plowman built them.

4. Original plans and construction: No information available.

5. Alterations and additions: In December 1933, the owner, Mrs. John Dodge Peter received a building permit to remove and erect various partitions, repair roof and cornices, build fireplaces and three toilets, install new heating plant, and "erect new brick front porch and timber balcony." In 1998, with some minor work still ongoing, the current owners, Elsa Walsh and Bob Woodward had the interior partition creating a north south corridor from the entrance to the kitchen removed, added new molding (which replicates the original) and undertook other repairs to restore the house to its original interior condition and appearance. The major change was the demolition of the rear (north) wall of the kitchen, with its large fireplace, and the erection of a large, well proportioned sunroom. As part of this project, the rear yard was redone, eliminating the swimming pool and other elements from an earlier renovation. The servants staircase in the kitchen was removed and a new staircase to the basement built as part of the 1998 project, designed by Muse Architects. The full extent of interior repairs and renovations by the current owners, especially to upper floors, was not addressed in the research on the house.

As this house is one half of a double house it is likely that its entrance was identical to that of the other half, 3029 Q. The entrance to 3029 appears original, and therefore can suggest how the entrance to 3027 looked until 1933/1934.

B. Historical Context:

According to the HABS documentation on Cooke's Row, Villa No. 3 (HABS No. DC-182): "Henry David Cooke (1825-1881), after running a newspaper in Ohio, came to Washington during the Civil War to manage the office of Jay Cooke and Company. This was one of the most prominent banking firms of the period, and had been founded by his brother. Henry Cooke was responsible for having Congress authorize the construction of the first street railway in the District of Columbia and became the president of the Georgetown Street Railway Company in 1862. Shortly thereafter he resigned to become president of the First National Bank of Washington. President Grant appointed Henry Cooke the first territorial governor of the District in 1871; he resigned from this position in 1873 because of the failure of the firm of Jay Cooke. Cooke's own Georgetown residence was the Dodge House at 30<sup>th</sup> and Q Streets, which he purchased from Francis Dodge, Jr. in 1867. According to legend, he built Cooke's row to establish residences for his twelve children. (Dictionary of American Biography, vol. IV, pp. 382-383)"

The Cooke brothers were of significant historical importance to cite additional sources. Constance Green wrote: "President Grant's appointment to posts in the territorial government, however, had already planted the seeds of fresh dissension. Individually the men he selected were inoffensive, but they were all Simon-pure Republicans. Henry D. Cooke, president of the First National Bank of Washington, brother of the Civil War financier Jay Cooke, won the coveted governorship. He had lived in Georgetown since 1863, had pleasant manners, and rumor said, had the still greater appeal of a large bank account." (p. 340, volume 1, *Washington: A History of the Capital, 1800-1950*, copyright 1962 by Princeton University Press). Henry Cooke owed his local political prominence as well as his wealth (and landholdings) to the financial preeminence of his brother during and following the Civil War.

"Jay Cooke was a dapper figure--- prematurely gray, able, quick-witted and patriotic. During the Civil War the Lincoln administration at first found it hard, when victory seemed doubtful, to persuade the major banking houses of New York to buy government bonds. Cooke, who operated a small private bank, seized the opportunity and by the time the war ended had established himself as the man who financed the war... With peace, Cooke moved into financing another huge enterprise, the Northern Pacific Railroad... Cooke shamelessly bribed congressmen to get the bill that authorized the transfer of millions of acres of Federal land to the Northern Pacific and generously financed the Republican National Committee during Grant's 1872 re-election campaign...." (pp 41-42, Ulysses G. Grant: Soldier & President, written and copyrighted 1977 by Geoffrey Perret, published 1999 Modern Library Paperback Edition).

Even when Jay Cooke is cast in more neutral tones, it is clear that the failure of his railroad lead directly to a major economic depression, which caused his downfall and his brother's as well as numerous investors. "The failure of the respectable brokerage firm of Jay Cooke and Company precipitates the country into a five-year depression. The Panic of 1873 causes 5000 businesses to fail in the first year and 10,478 will close before the country turns a corner in 1879," according to S.L. Mayer in *The Almanac of American History* (Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., general editor, ©1983 Bison Books Corp., pp324-325)

Against the background of the Jay and Henry Cooke's financial dealings and the Panic of 1873, the numerous transactions involving this parcel in the late nineteenth century become more understandable. Where at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth-century Georgetown parcels sold often reflecting the highly speculative real estate market, Cooke's numerous real estate transactions on this parcel (and presumably the others in Cooke's Row) most likely reflect Henry Cooke's efforts to protect his real estate against creditors for losses he and his brother suffered in highly speculative banking and railroad enterprises.

A gossip columnist in the April 6, 1976 Washington Star wrote "Riding High On The Watergate Wave ... Dear Old hasn't changed-a-bit Bob Woodward has gone out and done what anybody would do with sudden riches, Ear hears. He's snapped up an Italianate villa in Georgetown from blow-dry king Jean-Pierre Safarti." Woodward and Carl Bernstein first exposed the Watergate cover-up in Washington Post articles. Woodward continues to write for

the Post, as does his wife, and he has written several books.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Cooke's Row has been described by various architectural style terms, primarily as Italianate or Second Empire. It would be more accurate to note that the villas vary in their architectural details, borrowing to various degrees from these two styles. While Villa No. 3 has the Mansard roof characteristic of the Second Empire Style, the house's strongest element is the tower, which is more characteristic of the Italianate Style, with the emphasis on creating a picturesque profile against the sky.

2. Condition of fabric: The house and gardens are in excellent condition. Minor touch-up painting is being done at this time.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Villa No. 7 is one half of the last double house in Cooke's Row. The house is slightly less than 35 feet wide and nearly 80 feet deep to the rear of the recent sunroom addition. Because of the Mansard roof, the house has three full stories, plus a full basement and a sunbathed room in the tower at the fourth floor, used as an office by Ms. Walsh. The front or south facade is in three planes; the parlor with a projecting three-part window is closest to the street, slightly set back is the entrance to the right, and farther to the right and farther set back is the main block of the house. (The recent addition is slightly recessed on the east and west elevations).

2. Foundations: The foundation is brick and a stringcourse demarcates the foundation from the upper stories.

3. Walls: The walls are American bond with a row of headers every sixth course. It is clear from the color and stringcourse that the brickwork of the porch is later than the main block. The brickwork of the rear addition is clearly newer as it is a darker brick, which has not been painted. It is assumed that the architect's intent was to have the addition blend with the original wing, not calling attention to itself, without appearing to be part of the original construction.

4. Structural system, framing: It is assumed that the house is of load-bearing masonry construction, with heavy timber framing.

5. Porches, stoops: A series of steps with stone treads and brick risers, flanked by iron railings lead to a landing, covered with flagstone, and the vestibule. Based on permit records,



this porch was finished in 1934, in front of the original opening. The porch is topped in a three-sided sloped hip roof which terminates in tall railing in front of the second story window of the tower. Wide rear steps and landing, again done in the combination of brick and stone, opens onto the sunroom's double doors, flanked by sidelights.

6. Chimneys: Four chimneys are irregularly placed, with two on the west facade towards the front of the house, one on the east facade more towards the middle of the depth of the house, and one nearly centered on the original north (rear) facade, which is now the wall between the sunroom and the original house.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The front door is a paneled double door, with solid wood panels, with a series of square windows in a transom above. The sill of the transom has scalloped dentils. By contrast, the rear entrance consists of two double doors with four tall lights, flanked by side lights, also four tall lights, and topped by a arched transom, again filled with lights. The front door presents a private, concealed face to the street, while the rear doors which face the enclosed rear yard, provides a very light, open face.

b. Windows: The windows are tall two over two, with flat lintels over the front bay windows. The other windows are capped by slight or segmental arches, while the windows in the Mansard roof have round arches. Among the strongest details of the house are the sills and lintels of the windows. The sills are stone, supported by brick corbels, with the bottom edge of the sill chamfered between the corbels. The lintels are brick drip moldings, with pendants. On the upper floors on the south and east facades the brick drip moldings have been replaced by or augmented by projecting, wooden lintels supported by elaborate wooden brackets. These brackets have a deep, horizontal concave curve supported by a short, vertical convex curve. Either end of the bracket is terminated by a pyramid. The pendant below these brackets is also a pyramid, but three sided. The windows in the east facade of the rear addition, rather than duplicating the sills or lintels of the main block, have jack arches and minimal sills, consistent with the addition being closely compatible to the original construction, but not pretending to be part of the original construction.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The roofs of the tower, main block and addition are Mansards, with the latter two being three rather than four sided. The vertical surfaces are faced in slate, but the low top plane is apparently metal. The vertical plane has a convex curve rather than the more pedestrian canted slope.

b. Cornice, eaves: A deep cornice, supported by brackets, ties the facades together and provides the strongest detail to the house. The visual impact of the cornice is most notable at the tower where the cornice and eaves provide a dramatic, deep curved reveal for the dormer

windows. The cornice is supported by paired brackets, that are in the same family, but very different from the brackets under the windows hoods. The cornice brackets at the roof level as well as those in the front bay are vertical rather than horizontal like the window hoods. Also the curving and details have been changed, although the pyramid cap is repeated. In subjective terms, the flow of the cornice brackets is more staccato than that of the window hood brackets.

c. Dormers: The four dormers on the tower are round arched with the cornice following the curve of the window. By contrast, the dormers in the east and north elevations are also rounded, but are capped by broken-bed pediments, with dentils in the cornice.

### C. Description of the Interior:

#### 1. Floor plans:

a. Basement: The basement has a north south corridor, which is the same position as the corridors on the first, second, and third floors, although the first floor corridor has been removed.

b. First floor: The front doors open onto a small vestibule, flanked by bathroom and closet. Through an arched opening the vestibule connects to the entrance hall dominated by a spiral stairs. To the west is the parlor and north of it is the dining room. The wall separating the parlor and dining room was most likely removed in the 1933/1934 remodeling. East of the dining room and north of the entrance hall is the library and north of it is the kitchen. The kitchen flows into the sunroom to the north.

Second and third floors have rooms opening off of the north-south corridor.

d. Fourth floor is a is a single square room in the tower.

2. Stairway: A tightly curving stair leads from the entrance hall to the fourth floor tower room. The stair's railing starts with a polygonal sided newel. The newel consists of a wide base, tapers to a neck and then to a shaft, with belly and sleeve that narrows to another neck and then expands to the wide cap of the newel. The transitions from wide to narrow and wide again are stepped. The shaft of the newel has applied molding, with rounded corners, echoing the facets of the shaft. A single, turned baluster sits upon each tread. The baluster is composed of a multitude of shapes, including faceted and round components. The open-string stair runs along the northeast corner of the entrance hall. It is illuminated by occasional windows on the south and east facades. Two string courses are used, one type under the tread and a second type at the landings. Both are lacking in depth and consist of interlocking curlicues.

In the kitchen, at the northwest corner a servants' stair served the upper floors and a separate run descended to the basement. As part of the renovation these back stairs were removed. A new run to the basement, with the slope reversed, was installed.

1. Flooring: Vestibule and entrance hall have checkered pattern of black and white marble slabs. The other rooms have dark stained wooden floors, with the exception of the kitchen which has lighter stained wooden floors.

The floor boards show no indication of where partitions have been removed as the library floor was patched with boards from the kitchen, and the floor boards in the kitchen are replacements brought from another old house. In the new sunroom, the floor is largely covered with carpeting.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings were plaster, but much of the plaster ceiling has been replaced with sheetrock. With the exception of baseboards, crown moldings and door and window architraves, all of which appear to be replications of trim originally in the house, there is no wall or ceiling ornamentation. The sunroom ceiling is boxed beams.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: With the exception of the front door, which has much narrower jambs and header than the other doors, the doorway moldings are wide and relieved by a raised outside edge and other raised molding separated by unornamented friezes. As stated above the molding appears to be consistent with the date of construction, as it is a replication based on molding present before the 1998 renovations. The two doors into the parlor and living room were widened and the single doors replaced with double doors. The front door and door from dining room to backyard have transoms.

b. Windows: The window treatments are consistent with the door surrounds. However, the windows on the stairs are simpler, lacking the level of detailing seen in the first floor window surrounds.

6. Decorative features and trim: The fireplaces, in the parlor and dining room and library, are of wood painted to suggest stone. The robust fireplaces have curved mantleshelf with beveled edge. Centered below the shelf is an ornamental boss which is different for each mantel. The bosses in the parlor and dining room are three-dimensional designs suggesting shields capped with a row of convex moldings. By contrast, the library fireplace boss is flat with diagonal lines, suggesting a family heraldry. Two of the fireplaces, in the parlor and dining room, have arched openings, while that in the library is flat, leading to a difference in carving used to fill the planes of the mantel header and jambs.

7. Hardware: All hardware on the first floor appeared new, with small oval pulls used on the doors. At the window on the second floor landing, an original latch remains, next to a new one.

8. Mechanical systems: The first floor of the main block of the house has radiators, enclosed within screened boxes. These hot water radiators heat the original portion of the house,

while the addition and kitchen areas are warmed by a forced hot air system.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house is set back approximately 25 feet from the street, along the north side of Q Street. In front of the house and to the east are driveways executed in brick. Small areas of plantings soften the visual effect of the brick drives. Both the front drive and the east drive are shared with the neighboring houses and the east drive forms the east boundary of the house and leads back to the garage. Behind the house and west of the garage is the backyard enclosed by a high brick walls. North of the backyard is an alley running east-west.

2. Historic landscape design: The Evening Star, June 30, 1869 wrote that "These beautiful residences are set back from the street 25 feet upon lots 43' x 140' deep, thus affording beautiful front and side yards, which will be graded two feet (three steps) above the sidewalk, and terraced up from a level, leaving a walk inside the front fence, which fence will be composed of a 2 foot high faced brick wall with a neat iron railing... These houses cannot be surrounded and hemmed in on either side and they adjoin the beautiful and picturesque grounds of Mr. Henry D. Cooke who is also having constructed by the same gentlemen one of the most spacious and elegant mansions this side of Philadelphia." Author Mary Mitchell in *Chronicles of Georgetown Life, 1865-1900* wrote: "Until that time most Georgetown houses of any consequence had been built with several backbuildings, such as a small stable, an outhouse, a smokehouse, an icehouse, and miscellaneous sheds for chickens, tools, wagons, etc. But Cooke stipulated that the four double-villas he was planning were to have none of these, that all facilities were to be incorporated in the house-plan, and that the single outbuilding would be a party-stable, straddling the property line... It was typical of Cooke that the villas' dimensions proved too generous to accommodate the stable, which thereupon was summarily eliminated." (p 23, Seven Locks Press, Cabin John, Maryland) The source of Mitchell's statements is unknown.

3. Outbuildings: The garage was enlarged in 1970, and the swimming pool may date to that time as well.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Much of the information was from the Peabody Room of the Georgetown Branch of the D.C. Public Library. That material was supplemented by building permits at the National Archives, the files at the Washingtonian Room of the Martin Luther King Library, directories and other publications at the Historical Society of Washington, and information supplied by current owners and their architect, Desiree Escario with Muse Architects. The HABS documentation on Cooke's Row, Villa No. 3 was invaluable because it identified and quoted from the contemporary newspaper account in The Evening Star. The published histories used

for additional information on the Cookes and the Panic of 1873 are cited in the body of this report.

Prepared by: Bill Lebovich, architectural historian, January 2000

#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Georgetown Documentation Project was sponsored by the Commission of Fine Arts and undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) of the National Park Service. Principals involved were Charles H. Atherton, Secretary, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and E. Blaine Cliver, Chief, HABS/HAER. The documentation was undertaken in two phases. The summer 1998 team was supervised by John P. White, FAIA, Professor of Architecture, Texas Tech University; and architecture technicians Robert C. Anderson, Boston Architectural Center; Aimee Charboneau, Tulane University; Irwin J. Gueco, The Catholic University of America; and Adam Maksay, United States/International Council on Monuments and Sites (US/ICOMOS) architect from the Transylvania Trust. Historic research was initiated by Bryan C. Green, historian, Richmond, Virginia, during this summer. The summer 1999 team was supervised by Roger S. Miller, architect, Alexandria, Virginia, and architecture technicians David Benton, The Catholic University of America; Edward Byrdy, The Catholic University of America; Irwin J. Gueco, The Catholic University of America; and Clara Albert, US/ICOMOS architect from the Transylvania Trust. The project historian, and author of the written reports, was William Lebovich, architectural historian, Chevy Chase, Maryland. The photography was undertaken by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, and James Rosenthal, photographic assistant.